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is a possible intimation of coming independence; but another year passes before even in his correspondence with Lee he indulges in open threat of separation: "And if the British administration and government do not return to the principles of moderation and equity, the evil which they profess to aim at preventing by their rigorous measures, will the sooner be brought to pass, viz: *the entire separation and independence of the colonies*" (p. 100). As late as this, April, 1774, he was speaking of reconciliation, based on the acquisition of an explicit bill of rights. Even in January, 1775, he declared in a letter to Lee that he earnestly hoped that Lord North "would no longer listen to the Voice of Faction". In short the evidence from these papers appears to be conclusive that far from plotting for independence as early as 1768, as is commonly said on the authority of Wells, he was until 1775 desirous of continuing the union, if it could be maintained on principles that appeared to him just.

A. C. McLAUGHLIN.

Judah P. Benjamin. By PIERCE BUTLER. [American Crisis Biographies.] (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs and Company. 1907. Pp. 459.)

It does not often happen that a book designed to form part of a popular historical series is of great use to the special student of history. The present work is such an exception, and may be commended from both points of view.

Prominent as Benjamin was throughout his active public life, its records present a very unsatisfactory account. Though no recluse, he had no intimate friend whose testimony would be of value in revealing the real personality of this man whose exterior was more than usually illusive; and his extreme care to destroy all letters and personal data forces the student to seek the man in the contradictory public records of his political and legal career. These sources of information are widely scattered and not easily accessible. Mr. Butler's life is the first published attempt to collate all available material and to present the career of the great lawyer and politician as a whole and in detail. The thoroughness with which the work has been done will make this book an excellent guide to the original investigator. The general reader, for whom it is primarily intended, will find it readable and entertaining as well as full of important matter that is likely to be new to him.

Many students will be grateful for the author's researches among the New Orleans newspapers which cover the important political period during the twenty years that precede the Civil War. Here, in the local history of Louisiana, is reproduced with great distinctness an image in miniature of the vast political struggle which foreran the crisis in national affairs. Benjamin's active part in local contests and constitutional conventions is typical of his whole political course. Mr. Butler's account is admirable; but it is doubtful whether he has been

able to dispel much of that vague cloud of suspicion which always overhung Benjamin's actions as long as he took part in politics.

Benjamin's service in the Senate of the United States and his part in secession are told with justice and full appreciation of historical values; but Mr. Butler is less successful in his narrative of Benjamin's diplomatic activity as Secretary of State to the Confederacy. The scarcity of personal data is no doubt responsible for the fact that Benjamin is almost lost sight of in the historical background. For that matter, his part in the government of the Confederacy was in reality not very great. President Davis was the state, and Benjamin played a very secondary, though efficient, part.

Although Mr. Butler's aim has naturally been to give more prominence to the political and historical aspects of Benjamin's life, it is very probable that most readers will find greatest interest in that portion of the biography which describes Benjamin's achievements at the bar of England after the fall of the Confederacy. His career as statesman and politician, though brilliant, has never been freed from charges of intrigue. Nor was he ever, in a high sense of the word, a leader. Being governed too much by expediency, he followed, rather than directed, the course of events and the opinions of his constituents. Nothing but his shrewd facility of foreseeing political changes enabled him to act so promptly as to seem to lead where in reality he was merely drifting with the current. After all, it was as a supremely great lawyer that he won his most worthy distinction; and the hard beginning of his new life in England, after the loss of all political power, reveals for the first time to its full extent the real heroism as well as the supreme ability of the man. His character stands out nobler, stronger and more certain, as if he had found himself and his true work. Most sympathetically and inspiringly has Mr. Butler told this story of struggle and triumph. Here indeed the true greatness of the man appears in the free exercise of his natural powers in the work for which he was specially and supremely endowed.

If Mr. Butler had done no more than collect for the first time all the available material for this important life, his work would be of great value; but in addition to remarkable diligence and accuracy in gathering and presenting his facts he has shown the requisite breadth of view and justice in dealing with the controversial points which come up. Moreover, he has written with great care for the literary construction of his work, and has produced a most readable, as well as a most valuable, book.

ALBERT PHELPS.